

Seventh Grade Safety Formation for Home: Parent Teaching Guide
*(Adapted from the VIRTUS “Empowering God’s Children” Lesson Plans and
Diocese of Des Moines Catholic School Adaption)*

Lesson 1 - “Made in God’s Image: Personal Boundaries and Safety”

Parent Goal

Help your child understand:

- They are made in the image and likeness of God and possess God-given dignity.
- Personal boundaries help protect their dignity, body, and safety.
- The difference between safe and unsafe friends/adults, safe and unsafe touches, and special safe adults.
- The Personal Boundary Safety Rules: Say No, Get Away, Tell a Safe Adult.
- Safety rules apply with peers, friends, adults, online interactions, secrecy, gifts, pressure, and situations that create an uncomfortable or unsafe feeling.
- Respecting another person’s reasonable boundaries is part of honoring that person’s dignity.

1. Begin With a Faith Connection

“God created you in his image and likeness. Your body and your life are gifts from God. Because you have God-given dignity, you deserve to be treated with respect. You also have a responsibility to respect the dignity and reasonable boundaries of other people.”

2. Watch the VIRTUS Middle School Video (If Available)

Watch the linked together - <https://vimeo.com/1180990140/d8bf069a8f>

Say: “As we watch, listen for the basic rules of personal safety, warning signs that someone may be trying to hurt or pressure a young person, and safety rules that apply when using online tools.”

3. Recap the Video Concepts

Ask your child:

- “What are the basic rules of personal safety?”
- “What are some warning signs that someone may not be respecting your safety or boundaries?”
- “What safety rules also apply when you are using online tools?”

Guide them toward:

- Know and communicate your personal boundaries.
- Say “No” or “Stop” when someone crosses a boundary or makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Get away from the person or situation when possible.
- Tell a safe adult what happened and keep telling until someone listens and helps.
- Do not keep secrets about situations that make you feel unsafe, pressured, confused, or uncomfortable.

4. Review the Vocabulary (Parent Scripts Included)

Safe Friends/Adults “Safe friends and adults are people we know will respect us and will not intentionally hurt or confuse us.”

Unsafe Friends/Adults “Unsafe friends or adults put us at risk because they do not respect us, our safety, or our boundaries, or they hurt us.”

Private Body Parts “Private body parts are the parts of the body covered by a swimsuit.”

Safe Touches “Safe touches have a good purpose and are not intended to hurt, scare, or make someone uncomfortable.”

Unsafe Touches “Unsafe touches are inappropriate or hurt, scare, or make someone uncomfortable.”

Special Safe Adults “Some adults, such as a doctor or nurse, may need to see or touch a private body part for the purpose of keeping you clean and healthy.”

Boundaries “Boundaries are limits between your space and another person’s space that help people feel safe, healthy, and respected.”

5. Connect Boundaries With Being Made in God’s Image

Say: “Being made in God’s image means every person has dignity. Respecting your own boundaries and the boundaries of other people is one way we honor that dignity.”

- “Why is it important to create personal boundaries?”

- “Why can it sometimes be hard to say no when a friend or someone you trust crosses a boundary?”
- “What does it look like to respect another person’s boundaries, especially when you disagree with the boundary?”
- “If a friend does not want a picture taken or posted online, what does respecting that boundary require?”

Remind your child that knowing someone, trusting someone, or being friends with someone never removes the right to a reasonable safety boundary. A person can say “No,” move away, and tell a safe adult.

6. Review the Personal Boundary Safety Rules

Say No “Use a clear voice when someone tries to touch you, pressure you, or interact with you in a way that makes you uncomfortable or unsafe. You can say ‘No,’ ‘Stop,’ or ‘I don’t like that.’”

Get Away “Move away from the person or situation and toward a safer place or safe people.”

Tell a Safe Adult “Tell a trusted adult what happened. Keep telling until someone listens and helps.”

Discuss that gifts, surprises, requests for secrecy, peer pressure, or the fact that a person knows the family do not make an unsafe situation acceptable. If something does not seem right, the young person should involve a safe adult.

7. Identify Safe Adults

Say: “Take a moment and think about two or three adults you could tell if someone said or did something that made you feel unsafe, pressured, confused, or uncomfortable.”

Let your child name these people privately or aloud. Reinforce that a safe adult should listen, take the concern seriously, and help. If the first person does not help, keep telling another safe adult.

8. Activity: Practice With Scenarios

Say: “I am going to read some situations. For each one, identify the problem and give three safe, respectful ways to respond. Think especially about saying no, getting away, telling a safe adult, and respecting boundaries.”

Scenario 1: A friend invites you to spend the night. Later, the friend’s older brother takes you to a party where people are using alcohol and offer you some. You and your friend feel uncomfortable.

- What boundary or safety concern do you notice?
- What are three things you could do?
- Which safe adult could help if needed?

Scenario 2: At a park, someone you recognize tries to show you videos of people’s private body parts and says it is OK because they know your parents.

- What boundary or safety concern do you notice?
- What are three things you could do?
- Which safe adult could help if needed?

Scenario 3: At a restaurant, someone keeps staring at you, winks, and silently mouths words to you even after you look away.

- What boundary or safety concern do you notice?
- What are three things you could do?
- Which safe adult could help if needed?

Scenario 4: At a neighborhood picnic, a neighbor stands very close, follows when you move away, and reaches out to touch you.

- What boundary or safety concern do you notice?
- What are three things you could do?
- Which safe adult could help if needed?

Scenario 5: A friend posts a video from practice that shows you tripping. Other people begin laughing, and when you ask why it was posted, the friend says it is not a big deal.

- What boundary or safety concern do you notice?
- What are three things you could do?
- Which safe adult could help if needed?

Scenario 6: Friends want to change plans and see a movie your parents have told you that you are not allowed to see.

- What boundary or safety concern do you notice?
- What are three things you could do?
- Which safe adult could help if needed?

9. Close With a Faith Reminder

Say: “You are made in God’s image and likeness, and your dignity never depends on another person’s approval. You can set reasonable boundaries, respect the boundaries of others, and ask a safe adult for help whenever something feels unsafe, pressured, confusing, or wrong.”

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Lesson 2 - “Made in God’s Image Online: Boundaries, Consent, and Friendship”

Parent Goal

Help your child understand:

- Personal boundaries apply in digital spaces just as they do in person.
- Consent means a person freely agrees because they want to, not because they are pressured, bullied, or worn down.
- Before posting or sharing something involving another person, they should consider that person’s boundaries and seek consent.
- A person has the right to say no to having a picture, comment, or personal information posted or shared.
- Healthy friendship includes respecting another person’s digital boundaries and communicating one’s own limits.
- When an online situation becomes unsafe, troubling, or inappropriate, a safe adult can help.

1. Begin With a Family Check-In

Give your child a note card or sheet of paper. Let them know it is for reflection, not a grade.

Say: “How does technology impact your friendships or relationships? Write at least three ways. Think about your online friends and in-person friends, what people post, how people respond, and whether you ever feel pressure to answer or react.”

Invite your child to share whatever they are comfortable sharing. You might ask:

- “Is there a difference between your friendships online and your friendships in real life?”
- “How do posts, messages, and group chats affect friendships?”
- “Have you ever decided not to post or say something because you were thinking about how it might affect someone else?”

2. Connect Faith, Boundaries, and Consent

Say: “God-given dignity does not disappear when we go online. The people in our messages, photos, group chats, and social media are real people made in God’s image. Respecting their boundaries and asking for consent are ways we practice love of neighbor, responsibility, and respect.”

3. Watch “Boundaries and Consent” (If Available)

Watch the linked together - <https://vimeo.com/1180990140/d8bf069a8f>

Say: “As we watch, listen for what boundaries do for us, what consent means, and how both ideas affect the way we post, share, message, and respond to friends.”

4. Family Discussion: Boundaries and Consent Online

- “Why do we need boundaries when we are online?”
- “What do boundaries do for us?”
- “Are everyone’s boundaries the same? Why not?”
- “What is consent?”
- “When is consent freely given?”
- “Do you ask before posting a picture or information about someone else?”
- “How should you respond when someone asks you not to post something?”

Teach clearly: Consent is an agreement freely given because a person wants to agree, not because the person was pressured or bullied into saying yes.

5. Teach the “Ask Before You Post” Questions

Before posting or sharing something that involves another person, encourage your child to ask:

- “Should I get this person’s consent first?”
- “Would I be comfortable if someone shared this about me?”
- “Am I respecting my own boundaries and the boundaries of others?”
- “If one person in a group picture does not want it posted, am I willing to honor that person’s request?”

Say: “Respect is not decided by majority vote. If someone reasonably asks you not to post or share something about them, friendship means taking that boundary seriously.”

6. Talk About Friendship and Digital Boundaries

- “Do I know and understand my friends’ boundaries?”
- “Am I respectful of my friends’ boundaries online?”
- “Do I expect an immediate response to every message or post?”
- “Do I give friends space to study, sleep, spend time with family, or simply disconnect?”

- “If someone tells me a post or picture makes them uncomfortable, do I listen and respond respectfully?”

Explain that each person may have different boundaries about pictures, messages, group chats, time online, and personal information. Healthy friendship allows people to communicate those limits without being mocked, pressured, or ignored.

7. Activity: Work Through Digital Scenarios

Say: “For each situation, identify the problem, the boundary or consent issue, and a respectful next step. Think about what the person can do and when a safe adult should be involved.”

Scenario 1: Elena: Elena belongs to several active group chats. While she is trying to finish homework before a softball tournament, her phone constantly buzzes with messages. She feels she has to answer everyone or they will be upset.

- What is the problem?
- What boundary or consent issue is involved?
- What respectful next steps could the person take?
- When would it be helpful to involve a parent, guardian, teacher, or another safe adult?

Scenario 2: Josh: Josh posts many stories each day and becomes upset when friends do not respond quickly. His friends are also tired of appearing in pictures or comments he posts.

- What is the problem?
- What boundary or consent issue is involved?
- What respectful next steps could the person take?
- When would it be helpful to involve a parent, guardian, teacher, or another safe adult?

Scenario 3: Tatiana and Sonya: Tatiana is dealing with difficult changes at home and frequently texts her friend Sonya, sometimes at all hours. Sonya cares about her but feels overwhelmed by the constant conversations.

- What is the problem?
- What boundary or consent issue is involved?
- What respectful next steps could the person take?

- When would it be helpful to involve a parent, guardian, teacher, or another safe adult?

Scenario 4: A school chat group posts comments about things that happened during the day. A joking comment Vialdo made during a class project is posted without context, and many people begin commenting on it.

- What is the problem?
- What boundary or consent issue is involved?
- What respectful next steps could the person take?
- When would it be helpful to involve a parent, guardian, teacher, or another safe adult?

Scenario 5: A school club repeatedly posts pictures of Mei Sue. She tells the club leader that she is uncomfortable and asks that the pictures be removed, but the leader dismisses her concern.

- What is the problem?
- What boundary or consent issue is involved?
- What respectful next steps could the person take?
- When would it be helpful to involve a parent, guardian, teacher, or another safe adult?

Scenario 6: Canton: Canton's family has a rule that phones stay in the kitchen at bedtime. A friend continues sending late-night messages and altered pictures of Canton even after being asked to stop. Some comments are inappropriate.

- What is the problem?
- What boundary or consent issue is involved?
- What respectful next steps could the person take?
- When would it be helpful to involve a parent, guardian, teacher, or another safe adult?

8. Close With a Faith Reminder

Say: "Jesus calls us to love our neighbor and to recognize the dignity God gives every person. Online, that means respecting another person's no, asking before we share, giving friends reasonable space, and choosing words and actions that protect rather than embarrass or pressure others. You can always come to me or another safe adult when an online situation feels unsafe, inappropriate, or too difficult to manage alone."

Parent Follow-Up for the Week

Daily Reinforcement Ideas

- Ask: “Did anything online today make you feel pressured, overwhelmed, or uncomfortable?”
- Ask: “Did you have a chance today to respect someone else’s boundary?”
- Practice asking permission before sharing a family picture or story that involves another person.
- Talk about healthy response-time expectations for texts and group chats.
- Review one family rule for device-free time, bedtime, or homework.
- Remind your child that asking a safe adult for help is always a good choice.

Family Digital Boundary Rules to Post at Home

- I am made in the image and likeness of God, and so is every person I encounter online.
- I respect my boundaries and the reasonable boundaries of others.
- I ask before posting or sharing pictures, information, or stories about another person.
- I understand that consent should be freely given, not pressured.
- I honor another person’s request not to post or share something about them.
- I allow friends reasonable time and space away from messages and group chats.
- I tell a safe adult when an online situation becomes unsafe, inappropriate, confusing, or overwhelming.